Commonwealth Education Ministers To Meet in Halifax

Department of Education

News Releases

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Education ministers and officials from up to 50 Commonwealth countries are expected to attend the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Halifax, Nov. 26-30.

More than 250 delegates have registered to attend the conference to be held at the World Trade and Convention Centre and Halifax Metro Centre. The theme of the conference is Education in a Global Era: Challenges to Equity, Opportunities for Diversity.

The theme raises two pivotal issues in providing quality learning opportunities to all citizens of the 54 Commonwealth countries. At stake is how Commonwealth co-operation in education can help countries to make such opportunities available on a fair and equitable basis. The theme also touches on the Commonwealth countries' goal which is education for all.

The ministers will discuss an agenda for co-operation which can facilitate improved educational opportunities across the Commonwealth. Ministerial committees will focus on three education themes that reflect key issues and concerns shared across the Commonwealth: access, equity and mobility; quality and sustainability; and capacity building and utilization.

One major outcome of the conference will be a Halifax Declaration which will spell out a Commonwealth vision, guiding principles and action plan for education.

The Commonwealth represents 30 per cent of the world's population and a rich diversity of countries. The education systems of member countries have a common history and key characteristics in organization and administration.

The conference is organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat and co-ordinated in Canada by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the federal government. Canada has not hosted this event since 1964, and it is the first time it will be held in Nova Scotia. The previous conference on the theme of education and technology took place in Botswana in July 1997.

Another event will take place at the same time as the conference and in the same location. It includes an international symposium on the theme, Commonwealth Knowledge Solutions, and a trade fair with the theme, Shopping for Solutions.

During the symposium, education experts will address practical

and technical aspects of the topics being discussed by ministers. The trade fair will exhibit projects, products, tools, systems and approaches that offer proven and/or promising solutions to many challenges that the ministers will be discussing. In the best traditions of the Commonwealth, it will also provide a forum for the rapid sharing and transfer of solutions between member countries.

A youth arts showcase entitled A Splendid Torch, will highlight the talents of young Canadian artists. Bringing together more than 180 performers from across the province, the showcase will feature vocal and instrumental music, dance, theatre, visual arts and literary arts. The showcase is being organized by the Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat.

Additional information on the Commonwealth can be found on the website at **www.thecommonwealth.org** . Information on the conference, symposium and trade show can be found at **ccem.ednet.ns.ca** .

FOR BROADCAST COPY:

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More than two-hundred and fifty delegates will attend the event to be held November 26th to 30th.

The theme of the event is Education in a Global Era: Challenges to Equity, Opportunities for Diversity.

A major outcome of the conference will be a Halifax Declaration -- spelling out a Commonwealth vision, guiding principles and action plan for education.

A symposium, trade fair and youth arts showcase will be held in conjunction with the conference.

Information on all the events can be found on the Internet (ccem.ednet.ns.ca).

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Media representatives wishing to cover the conference must be accredited in order to have access to the facilities. For a copy of the accreditation form e-mail release@gov.ns.ca or call 902-424-4492. Freelance journalists must be sponsored by a recognized news organization and attach a letter of assignment to the accreditation form. The form should be completed and faxed to the Nova Scotia Department of Education at 902-424-0680 on or before Tuesday, Nov. 21.

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